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Some Considerations  
ON THE  
DANGER  
OF THE  
CHURCH.

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CONSIDERATIONS  
ON THE  
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OF THE  
CHURCH.





SOME  
CONSIDERATIONS  
*Ann* ON THE *Pinnell*  
DANGER  
*England, Church of* OF THE  
CHURCH  
From her own  
CLERGY.

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Humbly Offer'd to the  
Lower-House of CONVOCATION.

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— hinc Spargere Voces  
In vulgum ambiguas. —

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L O N D O N

Printed, and Sold by J. Roberts, in  
Warwick-Lane. J. Harrison, at the  
Royal Exchange, and A. Dod, near  
Temple-Bar. 1715. (Price Six-Pence.)

SOME  
CONSIDERATIONS  
ON THE  
DANGER

OF THE  
CHURCH

From her own

CLERGY

Lower-House of CONVOCA-  
TION Humbly Offer'd to the

In urgent conjuncture.  
— Nine Spargers Votes —

LONDON

Printed, and Sold by J. Roberts, in  
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( 5 )



ABOUT FIVE or SIX Years ago, we  
were terribly alarmed with the Danger  
of the Church; and tho' the necessity  
of the People had fix'd no distinct Idea  
to the Ministers, who were  
strangely erring, because knowing they  
knew not more, was said to be in Dan-  
ger.

**TO THE**  
**Lower-House**  
**O F**  
**CONVOCATION.**

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*Reverend* **SIR S,**



**SINCE** it is your Province  
to consider the State of  
Religion, I have taken  
the Freedom to trouble  
you with the ensuing  
Letter; in which, whe-  
ther there be any Argument, is submitted  
to Judgment.

**A 3**

**THE**



THE only Apology I shall make for my self is, that I sincerely aim at Truth; and since we are a *free People*, I think Truth may be told without Offence, to every unprejudic'd and true *Englishman*.

ABOUT Five or Six Years ago, we were terribly allarm'd with the *Danger of the Church*; and tho' the generality of the People, had fix'd no distinct Idea to the Word *Church*, yet they were strangely enrag'd, because *something* they knew not *what*, was said to be in *Danger*.

I have observed, during the late *Four Years Administration*, the *Church* was very *secure* in the Opinion of those Gentlemen who proclaim'd its *Danger* before; I mean the generality of the *Clergy*.

BUT what most surpriseth me is, That the *Church* is again in *Danger*, since His Majesty King *GEORGE's* happy Accession to the Crown of these Realms. A great many People, from the influence of the *Clergy*, are apt to believe so, and consequently cannot have a good Opinion of His Majesty's Government.

I thought, for my own part, I had impartially Consider'd this Matter of the *Church's Danger*, when it was first reported, and then I imagin'd I had Reason to conclude it was all Chimerical.

DURING the Four last Years of the late Ministry, I confess, I was put to a stand, would have been glad if the *Church* had been *out of Danger*; and had not God in his good Providence deliver'd us, we should have had no Occasion for an Argument, at this Day, to have been convinc'd of *Her Danger*.

THE Question is, *Whether now the Church be in Danger?* This the generality of the Clergy affirm, and have us'd diverse Arguments to possess their Auditors with the same Opinion.

BY the *Church*, I mean the *Church* of *England*, as by Act of Parliament establish'd, consisting of *Bishops, Priests, and Deacons*; for which Constitution I am sincerely Zealous. This has made me consider a second Time, whether there be any thing in this Report, *sc.* That the *Church* is *now in Danger*. I am very sorry, that upon as thorough a Search into this Affair as I am capable of making,

king, I am oblig'd to give it as my Fears,  
*That the Church is now in real Dan-*  
*ger.*

THE Question that will naturally  
 here be ask'd me, is, *From what Quar-*  
*ter does this Danger of the Church a-*  
*rise?*

*I Answer.* Not from the glorious Ac-  
 cession of King GEORGE to the Crown  
 of these Kingdoms ( whom GOD long  
 preserve ) for we have His Royal Word,  
*That the Preservation of our Constitution*  
*in Church and State, shall be both His*  
*Care and Delight.* The Church can  
 be in no Danger from the present Ad-  
 ministration, because the Ministers now  
 at the Helm, have always shew'd the  
 utmost Abhorrance of a *French Govern-*  
*ment,* and a *Popish Prince,* and on the  
 other Hand an inviolable Attach to the  
*Protestant Succession,* in the most Illustri-  
 ous House of HANOVER, as by the  
 whole course of their Actions, has  
 been made appear to all who reflect with  
 Impartiality.

NOR can the Church ( one would  
 think ) be in Danger from *Popery,* since  
 we have not only a Powerful *Protestant*  
 Prince on the Throne, but the invalu-  
 able



able Prospect of a Succession of such for Ages to come: Therefore there can be no *Danger* in all human Probability from that Quarter.

IF there should be any Attempts made by a *Popish Prince*, it is to be hoped, the *Clergy* will (as heretofore in the Reign of *James the Second*) do all they can to *Resist him*, and *Defend the Church*, not only with the *Sword of the Spirit*, but by encouraging all lawful Attempts by *Force*.

NOR, in the last place, can the *Church* be in *Danger* from the *Dissenters*, whom the *Examiner* calls *Atheists, Deists, &c.* But that mercenary Party, and prostituted Scribler, is not to be minded; for one would almost conclude, he has made a Contract with the Devil, the *Father of Lies*, because he tells 'em so thick, and with such a Fore-head.

BUT why can it be in *Danger* from the *Dissenters*? For it is upon the account of their *Tolleration* that we have the Noise of the *Church's Danger*, at least this gives the *Clergy* a Handle to promote it.

B

HOW

How can the Church be in Danger from the Dissenters? When in the first place, they have been represented, especially during the late Administration, as a very inconsiderable Body of People, and consequently to persecute and harass 'em would make no Disturbance in the Nation: This has been insinuated even by dignified Priests. Thus the poor Man was envy'd the Enjoyment of his Lamb, by his wealthy Neighbour, whose Estate could have been in no manner of Danger from his contented Enjoyment of what Heaven had made his little Property.

AGAIN. How can the Church be in Danger from the Dissenters, when She is Fenc'd about with so many Acts of Parliament, as the Test, the Conformity, and Schism Acts. Whosoever considers the Purport of those Acts, must conclude, That if the Power of Human Laws can Secure the Church, or prevent Danger from the Dissenters, then she is certainly out of any such Apprehensions.

I cannot but Wonder at the Clergy's Out-cry of its Danger from thence, because if they really consider'd, they would

would find they betray their own Cause thereby, and give wicked Men occasion to suspect, that the Church is not so *honest* and *good* as it should be; for then (say they) it would not so frequently be in *Danger*.

ON the other Hand then, on the *Affirmative*, The Church is in *Danger*; and that from *her Self*: Her greatest *Enemies* are those of her own *Houſhold*; or at least, those who pretend to be her greatest *Advocates*; I mean such as are commonly distinguish'd by the Title of *High-Church Clergy*. I assert, 'tis from these, and these only, that the Church of England is in *Danger*, which I prove as follows. *ſc.*

FROM their *Atheistical Principles*; Their *fondness of Power*, and *readiness to Persecute* those that differ from 'em: From that *Spirit of Fanaticism and Enthusiasm*, which possesses 'em. And lastly, From their *readiness to Sacrifice and Prostitute*, on the account of *Gain or Interest*, that Religion they pretend to maintain and be zealous for. From hence I shall be able to make good my Charge, tho' I am sorry I have the Occasion.



AS to their *Atheistical Principles*, I shall only instance in One, which is their *beloved One*, and that is, *The unlawfulness of resisting Monarchs upon any account whatsoever*. This they Affirm, Value themselves upon it, making this Principle the Glory of the *Church of England*; and in short, Condemn every Body, as *Atheists*, who oppose them herein.

BUT they will not give themselves Time to think what unlucky Consequences attend this Opinion of theirs; that it is really *Atheistical*, contrary to the very *Reason and Nature* of Things; inconsistent with the *Order and Dignity* of our Beings; and must needs rob our great Creator of his Attribute *Wisdom*, which is very absurd.

THAT this Principle of *Absolute Non-Resistance*, on any Occasion whatsoever, is *Atheistical*, will appear thus.

IF we suppose a *Providence*, or that God exerciseth a divine *Government* over the World, we must grant at the same Time, that it is consistent with his Moral Perfections so to do, otherwise God would be unworthy his own Being, which cannot be suppos'd: When I say,  
Consistent

Consistent with his Moral Perfections, I mean agreeable to infinite Wisdom, Goodness, Justice, and Truth; and consequently that Magistrate cannot be ordain'd of God, who makes it his Business to break through those Rules.

BUT, say the *High* Clergy, tho' the Magistrate breaks thro' all the Laws of Nature, commits Murther, Rapine, and tho' he takes away the Native Properties of his Subjects, yet 'tis a damnable Sin to Resist; the Reason they assign, is, because God has given him a Commission so to do, he does what he does *Jure Divino*, and therefore not accountable here.

BUT, can any Body, who has form'd any tolerable Notions of Good and Evil, or of a Divine Being, believe that ever such a Commission was issued from Heaven; nay, is it not safer upon the Supposition of the Truth of that Principle, to conclude there is no God, than to make him an Almighty Tyrant, the Author and Abettor of all Mischief? as that Notion necessarily inferreth.

NOR will it save the matter to say, God will call ill Magistrates to an Account himself, and therefore tho' we are  
never



never so much Oppress'd by them, we must seek after no Redress, but *obey Passively*; because that reflects upon his Justice and Goodness. Can it be suppos'd that God has ty'd Millions of People down to the Tyranny, Oppression, and Caprice of one Man, who calls himself his *Vicegerent*, to be Murther'd, and their Estates to be taken from 'em at Pleasure; nor must they seek Redress on pain of Damnation in the other World? Can a Man believe this, and yet say there is a God whose Ways are equal?

IT will be said, it may be, This is to punish such People for their Sins: I answer, That it seems a very odd Method of Punishment, for a Man to come with a Commission from Heaven to commit all manner of Wickedness, and yet this to correct Sin in others. 'Tis true God may suffer a Nation for a time to fall into the Hands of Tyrants, as he did the People of *Israel*, but then they were under no apprehensions of *eternal Damnation* if they Resisted; they thought it Lawful, if Opportunity presented, to redress themselves by Force, and if Success attended, they made no Scruple to tread upon the Necks of those Monarchs who had Oppress'd 'em.

BUT,



BUT, according to our *Clergy*, Monarchy is *Jure Divino*, and consequently 'tis a damnable Sin to Resist on any Occasion whatsoever. If this be True, how many horrible Sins of this nature were the *Israelites* guilty of? If it be objected, That these were Foreign Kings, and not their own, and on that Account they might resist;

I answer; If one Monarchy be *Jure Divino*, then all are so; or what Reason is there to conclude one so, and not another? And therefore if it be Lawful to resist one, 'tis Lawful to resist another: I am sure Oppression is of the same Nature, Tyranny is Tyranny, and People, so long as they have their Senses, will feel it whether it be from Strangers, or from amongst themselves; and if it be lawful to seek Redress from Tyrants of other Nations, in Case they oppress us; 'tis certainly as reasonable to seek for a Remedy, when under Tyranny at Home.

HOW contrary this Notion of *Non-Resistance*, on any ground whatsoever, is to the Reason and Nature of Things, to all Morality, Equity, and Justice, is evident: Because Right and Wrong, Good and Evil are thereby confounded; that  
this

this is so, every Body, at first view, may discover; and I am sure that Opinion which destroys Morality, must needs be Atheistical.

**LASTLY,** This Notion of *Passive Obedience*, is below the Dignity of our Beings, making us in a worse condition than the Brutes, or at least upon the same level with 'em, as tho' Monarchs had the same Property in our Persons as we have in our Cattel, and when they think convenient to make a Meal of us, may do it with a safe Conscience, having a Commission from God so to do, and he that dare's resist, is Damn'd of Course.

**BUT** why has God given us Reason, and by that Faculty distinguish'd us from the Beastial Herd? Why has he endued us with Understanding? Is it with Design only that we may be sensible of our Pain and Misery? That we may aggravate our Sorrow by Discovering the Injustice, Pride, and Tyranny of those who oppress us? This is so absurd, that one would rather conclude there is no God, than that he gave us these Powers for those Ends only, and yet so it must be if the Doctrine of *Non-Resistance*, on any Foundation whatsoever, be true; and therefore I conclude, that  
the



the Clergy in abetting this Principle, have been abetting and promoting an atheistical Principle.

THE next Argument which presents it self, to prove the Church in Danger, is, That fondness of Power the Clergy have shewn, and their readiness to Persecute those who differ from 'em.

I need not take any Pains, to prove the first Part of this Charge; for nothing is more evident, than that they have been Pleading for a Power independent of the Civil: That their Hierarchy is *Jure Divino*, as well as Monarchy: And perhaps, the true Reason of their Pleading for the Divine Right of Monarchy, is that they may introduce the same Account of their Priesthood. *Mantus manum fricat.*

NAY, they exalt the Mitre above the Crown, inasmuch as the former takes care of the Souls of Men, the latter of their Bodies and Estates only: So that between these Two, if the Priests could get their Scheme to bear, the poor People would be in a very hopeful Condition.

WHEN I say the Clergy have shewn a great fondness of Power; I mean such  
C Power



Power as does not belong to 'em, and is as unlawful as it is impossible, for any Man whatsoever to exercise. For supposing 'em Ambassadors of Christ, (tho' I never met with any of 'em yet could produce their Credentials) he never gave 'em Power to Dictate to, or Authority over the Consciences of Men, because that would be giving up the Prerogative of the Almighty.

A N D indeed, so far have some of the Clergy gone in the Business of Excommunication, as to say, that tho' the Priest has acted *clave errante*, or pronounc'd the Sentence unjustly, against the Person excommunicated, yet God was obliged to execute this Sentence, because whatsoever the Priest binds on Earth is bound in Heaven.

SELDEN *de Synediis*, Lib. 1. Cap. 10. gives a very convincing Instance of that Power claim'd by the Priests.

THE Council of Roan, speaking of Excommunication, declare themselves thus: *Nostre mediocritatis Autoritate et Potestate, nobis divinitus collata, ligandi et solvendi, in Cælo et in Terris, &c. That is, ' By the Power and Authority which God has given to our Mean-*  
ness,

' nefs, to bind and loose both in Heaven  
 ' and in Earth, we shut N. N. out of  
 ' the Pale of the Church, as well in  
 ' Heaven and in Earth, and Decree him  
 ' Excommunicated, and Anathematized,  
 ' and Sentence him to be Damn'd with  
 ' the Devil and his Angels in Hell-Fire  
 ' to all Eternity.

MR. DODWELL tells us (he him-  
 self giving into that Opinion ) that both  
 the *Greek* and *Latin* Churches agree'd in  
 making the Bishops superior to Kings :  
 They tell us, that the Power of the  
 Prince touches the Body only, but the  
 Power of the Priest touches the Soul  
 also, and reaches Heaven it self, in such  
 sort, that whatsoever the Priest deter-  
 mines here beneath, God confirms it in  
 Heaven.

THIS sort of Power our Clergy have  
 seem'd very fond of, and endeavour to  
 maintain. I think I am not too uncha-  
 ritable, if I say this is to keep up their  
 Craft ( for they themselves must needs  
 know there is nothing in it otherwise )  
 that they may be had in great Venera-  
 tion by the People, and the more easily  
 gull them of their Money : For what  
 will not poor superstitious People give to  
 the Priests, when they are perswaded 'tis  
 in



in their Power to send them either to Heaven or Hell. But the more thinking part of Mankind, can easily see through the Farce, discover the Grimace, and that 'tis all a Bite,

**T H A T** the Clergy mean nothing by their Religion, but their own Power and worldly Interest, this, I humbly conceive indangers the Church : For it will not always serve their Turn, to salve all Objections, by crying out against *Atheism* and *Deism*, when really the *Atheism* and *Deism* returns upon themselves. When our Clergy are oppos'd by Men of Sense and Reason, when they are pinch'd by Argument, the way they have to confute 'em, is, by calling such Names as I mention'd but now. This will not always do, their *ipse dixit* must not always pass for Argument, when their own Principles ( to say nothing of their Practises ) are enough to make Men Atheists, if they attend to the Consequences of 'em, which I think must needs *indanger the Church*.

**C A N** any Man in his Senses believe that God Almighty ever gave such a Power to any Mortal upon Earth, as the Clergy pretend to in Excommunication, much less to a debauch'd, profane Priest ? Yet such a Stress is laid upon Episcopal Ordination,



nation, that tho' their Conversations be criminal, God is obliged to execute the Sentence they pronounce against others, perhaps against their innocent Neighbour. I ask again, if this be true, as the Clergy assert, how can a Man believe the Being of a God, when such a Being is made to act with the greatest Injustice, Weakness, and want of Wisdom ?

A L L the World will allow, that there can be no Body of Men more fond of Power, than the Clergy, whether this Power be imaginary or real, they are not contented with the former, which the Ignorance and Superstition of Men has allow'd 'em, thereby to frighten People, by dictating to their Consciences ; but if the Government put the latter in any measure into their Hands, they quickly fill the Courts of Judicature and Prisons, with such as they call Criminals. They presently think themselves proper Judges of the Consciences of Men, and can tell how to Cure scrupulous ones. Their *Methodus Medendi* in this Case, is not cool Reasoning, and sober Argumentation : But if you will not conform to our Way and Discipline, say they, we'll first of all give your Souls to the Devil, as being *Atheists*, and *Heretics*, and dangerous to the Church ; and then

then your Bodies to be burnt, according to that Law *De Heretico Combure*. (the repealing of which, was not long since Lamented by a reverend Gown-Man) as for your Estates, the Church will take care that they be employ'd to pious Uses, and no doubt cannot be better laid out, than among the Priests. 'Tis not at all strange to me, that those who will presume to take upon 'em the Place and Province of almighty God, will be guilty of Murthering and Robbing their Fellow-Creatures. Those who will rob God of his Glory, will make no scruple of invading the Property of their Neighbours. 'Tis certain, whosoever Persecutes on the account of Conscience, does not only put himself in the place of God, as Judge of the Hearts of Men, but he is necessarily a *Thief and a Robber*, one that breaks through all the Laws of Society and Morality; how such Men are to be dealt with, or trusted, I know not.

*FOR Example.* I have a natural Right to be of the Communion of the *Church of England*, as believing that to be the best constituted Church in the World. But, says my Neighbour, I think the *Presbyterian* Order more Apostolick, and have as much a native Right to be a *Dissenter*, as you have to be a *Church-man*. I am  
sure



sure one that will do to another, as he would be done unto, would answer in the *Affirmative*. : And so it must be, unless Christianity teaches us to transgress moral Rules. None but the Priests, and those bigotted to 'em, or such as make State Tools of 'em, will answer otherwise. Such, I am sure, let them pretend what they will, are Foes to God and Man, and mean nothing by the Word *Church*, but themselves. 'Tis such as these that endanger the *Church of England*; their fiery Zeal leads 'em to such Measures as are bloody, *my Soul, enter thou not into their Councils !*

WHEN we see such a readiness to Persecute among the Clergy, we cannot forbear reflecting after this manner ; Can such Proceedings be for the good of Mens Souls ? Or, did ever God ordain the Breach of moral Precepts, to be proper Cures for deprav'd Minds ? Can such Measures be for the promotion of Christianity ? Or, does that Institution leave the Rights of Mankind upon a worse Foundation than it found 'em ? Certainly no. And therefore it cannot be promulgated upon the Destruction of 'em.

HENCE this leads People to conclude, as I said but now, that what the  
Clergy



Clergy pretend to, respecting Religion, is meer Pretence only ; that they have nothing to serve thereby but their own Interest ; and therefore the Church is in Danger from 'em.

ANOTHER Thing which indangers the Church, is, that *Fanaticism* and *Enthusiasm* now reigning, more especially among the Clergy.

THIS may be thought a very bold Charge, when the Clergy have appear'd very zealous against both the Articles. But their own Arguments may be now justly turn'd against 'em ; whilst they have been hot in opposing the *Fanaticism* and *Enthusiasm* of the *Dissenters*, they have over-shot themselves, and tumbled into the very Extrems in which they suppos'd their Neighbours. (*Fœlix quem faciunt aliena pericula cautum !* )

THE first Part of this Charge, is, *Fanaticism* ; that the Clergy are guilty of it, appears to me thus, *sc.*

FROM their *Pulpit-Speeches*. If a Man could entertain him with Half an Hour, or an Hour's insipid Rallery, he might be plentifully accommodated every *Sunday* by a great many of our Clergy  
in

in and about Town ; this appears not only by their common Practice, but by those printed Libels they call Sermons, and what is yet worse, the Word of God. 'Tis an easy matter to beg the Question, and then to rail on, they take it for granted, that their Order is *Jure Divino*, and he who dares dispute it, must be deem'd an Atheist, or Deist. Hence they go on to rave about the Danger of the Church, saying, *The Temple of the Lord, the Temple of the Lord*, are We ; and if Reason and Argument obstruct 'em in this Career, 'tis all bore down with this popular Cry, as in another Case of old, *Great is Diana of the Ephesians* !

WHAT must a Man think, when he hears or reads a Pulpit-Speech, full of nothing but ill Language, and *Billinggate* Eloquence ; can he avoid concluding the Parson stark mad, tho' probably not so much from his Learning as his Malice.

THEIR Insinuations against his present Majesty's Title to the Crown of these Realms, nay, I may say, their down-right attacking of it, plainly proves 'em to be possess'd with a Spirit of *Fanaticism* ; on which account I hope Power will never be put into their Hands, no more than one would put a Sword into the Hands

D

of



of a Mad-man. That this is true, is evident from their intollerable Misapplication of Scripture Phrases, under the Sanctity of which, they shelter their Knavery (*in Nomini Domine incipit omne Malum*) under this Mask they conveigh their treasonable Meaning to the People, in order to sow the Seeds of Rebellion. These are our *non-resisting Men* !

BUT does not this prove 'em to be *Fanaticks*, when the King is so well establish'd on the Throne, in the Affections of his People ; especially amongst those where Cash circulates most ? Was not the Crown settl'd on his Illustrious House by the whole Legislature ? And has he not the Army, the Exchequer, and the Bank of *England*, all at command ? And are not these Men the worst of *Fanaticks*, to attack him thus intrench'd ? Nothing sure, can provoke His Majesty to make any alteration in our Constitution in Church, but only such bold and *fanatick* Attempts that have been lately made from the Pulpit, by the Clergy, against his Government, and to disturb the Quiet thereof. His Goodness, I doubt not, will carry him beyond the just Provocations of such a *Generation of Vipers*.

AGAIN



AGAIN. Would Men in their Senses go to court an unruly Mob, by distributing Money, in order to drink Healths to the *Church* and the *Doctör* ? Is it not plain, that this has been the Practice of the Clergy almost throughout *England* ? What Insults have been offer'd to the King by this means, is known to every Body. This occasion'd a Proclamation for the suppressing of *Riots*, to be issued. What Affronts have been put upon his Ministry, even in the Face of Justice ? How ridiculous has the Church been render'd, by being scandalously painted, and carried in *Miniature* before those who call'd themselves the *Church Party*, to the Election of *Parliament-Men* for the County of *Kent*, in the Year 1714 ? This, as I am inform'd, was follow'd by a great Body of the Clergy, which is a sufficient Proof to me, they are turn'd *Fanaticks*.

I cannot dismiss this Subject, without taking notice, how well this Principle of *Passive Obedience*, is practis'd by those People who yet boast of it, as the pure Doctrine of the Church of *England*. 'Tis plain they have already *resisted* as far as they can, without down-right *Force of Arms* ; nay, the *Legislature* has been threaten'd with that also. This ariseth

from no other Spring, but that *fanatick* Noise of the Church's *Danger*. Nor can I avoid observing, that the Clergy can deal with this Principle of *Passive Obedience*, just as they do with all others, use it to serve their own Turn; and when Occasion offers, they can give Nature a *Dispensation to Rebel against Principle*; which makes it so lax a Term, that one knows not where to fix it.

UPON the whole, I think I may fairly Challenge 'em to shew me where *Fanaticism* now reigns. Who have been most guilty of it, the *Church*, or the *Dissenters*, who have been commonly call'd *Fanatics*? But can any Instance be given, that they ever show'd such a frantick Zeal? Nay, did ever the *French* Prophets ruffle their Constitutions, or distort their Faces more, than these have, with what they call *Zeal* for the Church? Their Madness has ran so high, that 'tis very common to hear People *Curse and Swear they are for the Church*, and unless a Man can run with 'em to the same Excess and Riot, they'll not believe him to be a good *Church-man* (*tantum Religio potuit, suadere Malorum.*) How dangerous this is to the *Church*, I submit to Judgment.



The next Branch of this Charge, is, *Enthusiasm*; and indeed *Enthusiasm* and *Fanaticism* generally go together, for when they see nothing is likely to be done by Raving about the Danger of the Church; by raising Riots and Tumults, they have Recourse to the old Trade of Miracle-Working, to see if by means of that Pretence, they can perswade the People they are Heavens Darlings. But what I am now to prove, is, That the Church of *England* is in Danger from the *Enthusiasm* of the Clergy, of which I shall give an Instance or two, and proceed to the last Thing mention'd, lest I should be too tedious in this Letter.

I call those *Enthusiasts* who lay aside Reason in Religion, take what Impressions they have upon their Minds, how absurd soever, to be Heaven's immediate Dictates, who follow their wild Fancies contrary to Reason and Revelation; interpret what happens, even in the natural Course of Things, to be extraordinary Tokens from Heaven, which they apply just as Occasion offers, or as their Humour directs them, and thus they make the same Tokens sometimes Judgments, and sometimes Blessings: 'Tis an evident Sign of an *Enthusiast*, when  
Things



Things go contrary to his Scheme and Inclinations for him, than to denounce Judgments on such as promote them.

IF the Perversion of holy Scripture may be deem'd *Enthusiasm*, there are none more guilty of it than the Clergy; any who reads those Libels publish'd by *Sacheverell, Whelton, Brett, &c.* may at first View discover that they make a meer Nose of Wax, and Leaden Rule of the Bible: I need not trouble the Reader with particular Instances of this Nature, but proceed,

WHAT has been already alledged, is sufficient to prove, that our Clergy in general are not so well affected to the King as they should, and as becomes good Subjects: Those who have made any Observation at all, cannot avoid Discovering their Aversion to the present Government, otherwise they would never so industriously and studiously evade Praying for his Majesty. They have not been so prudent as to keep their Resentments conceal'd; nor could they forbear Declaring, that that very Day appointed by Authority for a solemn Thanksgiving, on the Account of his Majesty's safe and happy Arrival in these his Dominions, ought to be a Day of

H47

**Humiliation to every true Church-Man:** Instead of Thanking God, as the Duty of the Day requir'd, they run on into their *Fanatick Enthusiastick* Cant of the Church's Danger. Of the Truth of which, there are Thousands of living Witnesses.

**WHAT** makes their *Enthusiasm* intolerable, is, that they are thereby perswading the People, that Almighty God is displeas'd at King *George's* Possession of the Crown: And on this Account, take all the Opportunities they can to perswade 'em that such and such Things are Judgments from God, because, in Effect, they say, we have not the right Heir.

**THUS**, I well remember, when his Majesty was on his Journey for *Great Britain*, the Wind being at West, it was then said, God Almighty would not suffer him to cross the Sea, but keep the Wind in that Quarter; this Notion, tho' *Enthusiastick*, and ridiculous enough, seem'd to keep up the Spirits of their ruin'd Party for a Time: But they saw, to their great Mortification, that when the King was ready to embark, the Winds, as it were, waited on him, they presented fair, Heaven smil'd, and granted



ed him a smooth, yet speedy Passage, and safe Arrival in these his Kingdoms.

THE unhappy Accident of some old Houses falling down, by which several People were kill'd, on his Majesty's Coronation-Day, was interpreted another Judgment of God upon the Nation, for shutting out him they call the Lawfull Heir; when any Body knows that old Houses, when so much Weight was upon them, may tumble without a Miracle, nor can such a Thing be any Indication of divine Displeasure, no more than any Misfortune, or unhappy Accident.

BUT to instance in no more, the late *Eclipse* of the Sun has been interpreted, as Portending Judgments on the Royal Family; and there is great Care taken to scatter the Notion; and to introduce what they have to say, they tell us, That such an *Eclipse* has not happen'd since *Stephen* the Usurper: And tho' a great many of our Clergy will not speak out, or at least dare not, yet they give such Hints and Insinuations, that any Body may understand 'em; by this means, some poor Souls are so far drawn in, as to believe that God will vindicate the Cause of their Friend the Pretender; hence their Spirits are supported



ported, and they are even ripe for Rebellion : If such a Temper as this endangers not the Church, I know not what will.

THE last Thing I shall mention which I imagine endangers the Church, is, the Clergy's Readiness to sacrifice and prostitute that Religion for which they pretend to have such a Veneration, which can be for no other End but Worldly Interest.

IT will be demanded of me, *How I make good this Charge?* To which I answer; One would think any Man that's tolerably acquainted with the Nature of Christianity on the one Hand, and the Manners and Proceedings of the Clergy on the other, could scarce be at a Loss in the Fixing of this Charge. I am sorry I have Occasion to say, That the Designs of the one, and of the other, seem to be directly opposite.

OUR holy Religion is a peaceable good-natur'd Institution; it polishes the Minds of Men, and makes 'em compleat Gentlemen. But what have we from the Pulpits and Conversations of the Priests, except Railing, ill Language, and the highest Indications of Malice, Pride, Avarice, and Rancour; these Vices we find plentifully promulgated among the common People and from whence have they 'em but from the Clergy? Are these the

Ministers of the Gospel? Are these the gentle Methods of Address our Saviour and his Apostles recommended? I wonder, for my Part, with what Forehead our Clergy lay claim to apostolick Succession, unless they could procure an Act of Parliament, that the Scriptures should be no longer read in *English*; and tho' this might be an ill Consequence, that a great many of 'em would probably be at a loss to read their Bibles, yet the Bible having been the least of their Study, they can easily dispence with such a trifling Inconvenience, since the Church will gain this grand Point, *sc.* Ignorance would then be the Mother of Devotion; then the Priests would have more Authority and Veneration.

AS I said before, Christianity did not leave the natural Rights of Mankind upon a worse Foundation than it found 'em; so far from that, it has left them upon a better; nor can there be a better Rule to compleat Society on this Side the Grave: But what have these Brokers in Divinity made of it, but a Bone of Contention, a specious Covert, under which to break the Law of Nature; to teach Men how it may be lawful for 'em to break that moral Rule our Saviour repeats, *As ye would that Men should do unto you, so do you unto them.*



I would here ask the Clergy, Whether they think they should be fairly dealt with, if they were deny'd the Education of their own *Children*, or that any of the Members of their *Communion* should not be capable of Enjoying a Place of Trust in the Service of his Country, unless he would conform to the *Presbyterian* Worship. I have very good Reason to believe they would complain bitterly of Persecution, since, in their Opinion, the *Church* is never free from being persecuted, but when she has a Power to persecute.

WITH what Gust and Relish were the *Conformity* and *Schism* Acts received? How pleas'd were the quack Justices of the Peace, and the drunken Parsons, to think that now it would be in their Power to devour their *Dissenting* Neighbours? Then the *Church* was in a flourishing condition, and a poor *Dissenter* could scarce put his Head out of Doors without being menac'd, affronted, and stigmatized. But when God in his good Providence deliver'd us from *Popery* and *Arbitrary Power*, then the *Church* began to be in as much Danger, if not in more than ever she was.

THE Reason of this is plain, *sc.* Because the Clergy could not proceed so fast as they would, to invade and take away the native Rights and Priviledges of their



Countrymen. If a Man may be allow'd to speak out, what is this but Sacrificing Christianity? For the *Heathen* in many places, (especially where their Priests do not interfere) preserve their native Privileges, and their Magistrates maintain 'em inviolable: What Inducement can the Clergy have to these violent Methods, except Pride and Interest.

IN the next place, how fond do our Clergy appear of the *Test Act*? This they esteem as the Bul-Work of the Church. Here I cannot avoide observing, That the Priests found *Dominion in Grace*, a Notion they have so often Exploded, and call'd the abettors of it *Fanaticks*, and *Enthusiasts*, I confels deservedly.

BUT is not this the very same thing, for say the Clergy, *You shall have no Power as a Magistrate, Supream or Subordinate, unless you are of our Church*; that is in the old Cant, unless we think you a Gracious Soul: How justly this is turn'd upon 'em, is likewise submitted to Judgment.

THE prostitution of the Sacrament, call'd, in the New Testament, *The Lord's Supper*, is what must needs lie heavy upon 'em, at least if they have any regard to our Holy Religion.

THUS much I hope will be allow'd me, that the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper is a *positive Institution of our Saviour*; that

that the Nature of a *positive Law* is such, that nothing can be added to it, or any thing taken from it, without calling in question the Wisdom and Integrity of the Law-giver; and therefore that the Design of this Law ought to be strictly follow'd, according to the true and plain Meaning of the Words in which it is deliver'd.

H E R E then, again I ask these *reverend Gentlemen*, Whether our Saviour ever design'd the Commemoration of his Death in the Sacrament, to be a *Civil Test*? I know some of the true and genuine *Church of England Clergy*, have greatly lamented this Abuse of the Sacrament; for it can be no less than misapplying one of our Saviour's *positive Laws*, and of course it must impeach his Wisdom and Integrity.

That which renders the matter yet worse is, that there is no occasion to make it a *Civil Test*; for if a Man will not be Bound by a solemn Appeal to Heaven before a Magistrate, he'll not think himself more obliged at the Altar before a Priest. What more can there be in this Law, than to gratify the Humour of a persecuting Clergy; and where is their regard to Religion, when they readily administer the Sacrament to such as they know live after the most scandalous and profane manner, and take it with no other Design, but only to fit themselves for their Employments.

THE



THE Design of the Sacrament is, no doubt, Religious, to excite in us Devotion, Love and Charity. I hope none will say, to take the Sacrament for a Place, *Civil* or *Military*, is a religious End; and therefore so long as it is administered upon that Foot, 'tis prostituted to profane Ends? The Clergy, as I said before, hug themselves on the account of this Act, and have the Face to Thank God for it. But let a Man of Candour, and a lover of Truth consider, let him make Observation of the Clergy's Conduct, and then let him see if he can avoid perceiving what a Medley is made of Christianity. One would almost conclude (but that it would be a little too charitable) that the Priests believe nothing of it themselves, because they use it to such little, such mean Ends and Purposes. What occasions so many *Atheists* and *Deists*, of whom they so often complain, but that such Men have got so much Sense as to see through the Juggle and Contrivance. If (*say they*) the Clergy can use Religion to such profane Ends and Purposes, then sure there is nothing in it, and they design nothing by it, but Interest and Dominion. Hence it is that the *Church* is in real Danger, and the Priests take the Method to make it every Day more and more so.

IF indeed the *Convocation* (who promis'd His Majesty in their *Address*, that they



they would be *Honest*, and on that Condition, the King promis'd to *take Care* of 'em ) would Petition the *Legislature*, to take off the *Test Act*, and to institute a *Civil Test* in the room of it, by which People would be as firmly Bound to maintain our Constitution, in *Church* and *State*, as they can by the *Sacrament*, I should then think they acted as those who valued our Holy Religion, and that they were in earnest promoting Christianity.

HOW often have the Judgments of God been denounc'd from the Pulpit, upon this Nation, upon the account of the Martyrdom of K. *Charles* the First? And have we not equal Reason to fear the Vengeance of Heaven, when we live in the daily Prostitution of one of our Saviour's positive Laws. This is rarely taken notice of by our Clergy. I am far from saying, all of 'em are of this Mind; no, there are some would be very glad to see the Church freed from these Clogs, and the Rights of Mankind maintain'd, and left upon the same Bottom Christianity sets 'em. But, alas! if these speak their Minds, they are presently reproach'd as *Fanatics*, *Presbyterians*, and *Enemies* to the *Church*; these are forc'd to lament in secret, the unhappy Circumstances that pure Institution of Christianity, is under in our Nation.

UPON the whole, I think it plainly appears,

appears, that if the *Church of England* be in any *Danger*, it is from her own *fanatick Priests*, who instead of preserving *Knowledge*, teach the People to *err*; instead of teaching 'em *Obedience* to Governours, instil *rebellious Principles* into 'em, and seem rather inclin'd that *Popery* should be establish'd, than that the poor *Protestant Dissenters* should have their *Liberty of Conscience* continued. They seem *Enemies to Trade*, being perhaps of Opinion, that the greatest *Plague* to the *Church* is a *wealthy Citizen*. This appears from their being so fond to give *France* the *Bill of Commerce*. I know not what *Spirit* has possess'd 'em, but sure I am, it is not from *God*; for that *Wisdom which is from above*, is pure and peaceable, gentle and easy to be intreated, full of *Mercy and good Fruit*, without *Partiality*, and without *Hypocrisy*.

GOD Almighty preserve His Majesty King *GEORGE*, and his Royal Progeny to latest Posterity, that Religion, Liberty, and Commerce may flourish, the Nation be safe and easy at Home, as well as formidable and terrible Abroad, to which I doubt not all *True Englishmen* will with me say, *Amen*.

F I N I S.



